(b) whether it is also a fact that the Kudremukh mines still have an estimated 6.5 billion tonnes of magnetite ore in its reserves, waiting to be exploited to feed the iron/steel sector; and

(c) whether because of undue weightage given for environmental safety aspects, large volume of mineral wealth would lay inaccessible for industrial development of the region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) Mining operations of Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) have been stopped w.e.f. 31.12.2005 in pursuance of order of Supreme Court. However, production of pellets at Mangalore plant is operational, though at much lower capacity.

(b) Kudremukh mines located in Western Ghats region have primary ore of 315 million tonnes and secondary weathered ore of 40-50 million tonnes approximately.

(c) An implication of the recent Supreme Court order in the case of KIOCL is that most of the magnetite deposits which are located in Western Ghats and similar sensitive environmental zones, may not be available for value addition.

Iron ore to sponge iron manufacturing companies

†2881. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of sponge iron manufacturing companies are on the verge of closure due to steep hike in the prices of iron ores;

(b) whether Government have formulated any scheme for providing iron ores to these companies at reasonable prices; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (DR. AKHILESH DAS): (a) No, Sir. However, Sponge Iron Manufacturers Association (SIMA) has informed that there has been some hike in price of iron ore during the last fortnight.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) As per the present policy of Government, the mining sector, including iron ore mining, is deregulated and Government does not fix the market price of iron ore.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

I. **Report and Accounts (2005-06) of the Madras Fertilizers Limited (MFL), Chennai and related papers.**

II. **Report and Accounts (2005-06) of the FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals India Limited, Jodhpur and related papers.**

III. **Report and Accounts of the Fertilizer Corporation of India Limited, New Delhi and related papers.**

IV. **Report and Accounts of the Projects and Development India Limited, NOIDA and related papers.**

V. **Report and Accounts of the Pyrites, Phosphates and Chemicals Limited, Rohtas, Bihar and related papers.**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): Sir, on behalf of Shri B.K. Handique, I lay on the Table:

A copy each (in English and Hindi) of the following papers, under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956:

I. (a) Fortieth Annual Report and Accounts of the Madras Fertilizers Limited (MFL), Chennai, for the year 2005-06, together with the Auditor's Report on the Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India thereon.

(b) Review by Government on the working of the above Corporation.

[Placed in Library. *See* No. L.T. 6235/07]

II. (a) Third Annual Report and Accounts of the FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals India Limited (FAGMIL), Jodhpur, for the year 2005-06, together with the Auditor's Report on the Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India thereon.